

A Car Seat for Your Baby

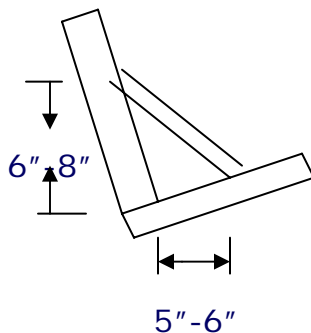
Adapted from WHMC handout
Damian Ternullo MD



Winn Army Community Hospital Pediatricians have created a checklist for you to make sure that your car seat is fitting properly. Some of these can not be addressed until your baby is born, but there are some general rules listed below for buying a car seat. Not all car seats fit all babies, and there are some unusual circumstances, but as a rule look for the following:

(1.) Shoulder harness should have a setting of 6-8 inches above the seat. The shoulder straps should be at or below your baby's shoulder in order to snug him or her down into the seat for maximum protection. Seats with multiple shoulder strap slots are usually fine.

(2.) The crotch length should be 6 inches or less from the back of the seat. The further away the belt buckles in front of your baby, the more your baby can slouch down rendering the seatbelts loose and unsafe. Many car seats are designed with the buckle about 8 inches from the seat back. Only the largest of babies can safely sit in these seats, and often only with added padding. There are no newborns that are too big for the 5-6 inch crotch length.



(Side view) look for:

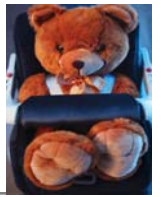
- ➡ Shoulder harness height
(6" - 8" up)
- ➡ Crotch length
(6" or less from back of seat)

Make sure that you car seat:

- A. Was never involved in a crash
- B. Is less than 6 years old
- C. Has not been recalled for structural reasons
www.nhtsa.dot.gov look for "Child Safety Seat Recalls" or call 1-800-424-9393
- D. No cracked or frayed safety belts
- E. Has a harness clip if required by manufacturer
- F. Has a certification sticker.

A Car Seat Checklist

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CAR SEAT CHECKLIST:	Go	No Go
Car seat has been in a crash	No	Yes
Car seat has been recalled for a major safety problem that affects seat function, and has not been fixed www.nhtsa.dot.gov	No	Yes
Car seat is structurally sound. (no cracks, frayed straps)	Yes	No
Car seat has harness clip (chest clip if required)	Yes	No
Car seat is over 6 years old (if yes get a new one as soon as practical)	No	Yes
Car seat has aftermarket cushions/devices (cushions might be flammable or affect harness From working properly. Remove)	No	Yes
There is a compliance/certified statement sticker (Get a car seat declaring compliance as soon As practical)	Yes	No
There is an instruction book telling parents how to fit seat in car. (Rear facing, at appropriate angle, less than 1 inch pull away from seat back and less than 1 Inch side to side slide.)	Yes	No

CAR SEAT FITTING CHECKLIST	Go	No Go
The shoulder straps can be made tight (Only one finger between strap and Collar bone, if no get new seat)	Yes	No
The shoulder strap is at or below the infants shoulders (until 12mos & 20lbs)	Yes	No
The distance from the baby's crotch to the harness is less than 1 inch (prevents slouching) (If 1-2 1/2 inches place roll about as thick as A hotdog bun if >2 1/2 inches, need new seat)	Yes	No
The harness clip fits near the nipple line (over the babies rib cage)	Yes	No

KEEP YOUR RECEIPT, USUALLY STORES WILL EXCHANGE THE CAR SEAT